



University of Liverpool, Room 209, Roxby Building, Chatham Street, Liverpool, L69 7ZT

Email: [merseysideenvironmentaltrust@gmail.com](mailto:merseysideenvironmentaltrust@gmail.com)

Registered Charity Number: 517132

## Chairman's Report 2013

### All Change

It has been an interesting year starting from the last November at the last AGM when Grant Luscombe the then President and Don Thompson the then Chair stepped down and Stephen Yip was elected as our new President and I took over as Chair.

The Trust still continues to function with the active support of volunteers and the Executive Committee and financially is still healthy. Two long standing members of the Executive Committee have stood down this year, Dr Roland Graham and Jim Martin, both have given many hours of their time in the pursuance of the Trusts objectives and I would personally thank and acknowledge their contributions over the years and wish them well for the future.

If I could also recognise the contributions of Don Thompson as acting Treasurer and Editor of Metmail who along with our Vice President Dr Geoff Woodcock engage with like-minded organisations on behalf of MET and maintain our profile and standing.

Also the valuable research and policy contributions of Dr Stella Shackel and Prof. Derek Gould again helping us to maintain a credible balanced voice and now you have the opportunity to join in the debates and discussions via Twitter and Googlegroups thanks to Stella, and a thank you Chris Hennessy for keeping us challenged and not letting us rest on our laurels!

Finally on this brief trip round the Executive Committee I would like to give a big vote of thanks to our newest member Patience Jones who has been a star in the role of Secretary maintaining dialogue with the Charity Commission, sorting the membership database and with the aid of her son rebuilding the MET website.

We have had a year of challenges not least the fact that we have moved offices, we are still hosted by the **University of Liverpool** for which we thank them as our longest supporting patron. We have come out of the darkness of the basement of the Building of Civic Design and are now in the light of the second floor of the Roxby Building with a room with a view of trees.



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## Focus Activity

This year we made a focus of Climate Week (March 4<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>), Climate Week is Britain's biggest climate change campaign, inspiring a new wave of action to create a sustainable future. We supported this Campaign by inviting MET members and guests to come and watch Oscar nominated Pete Postlethwaite star in Spanner Production's Age of Stupid, as a man living in the devastated future world of 2055, looking back at old footage from our time and asking: why didn't we stop climate change when we had the chance?

The Event was sponsored by **Emansys Sustainable Business Solutions**

We also teamed up with Green Drinks Liverpool for the very interesting, challenging and fun Climate Week Pub Quiz.

June came with our traditional **Environment Week** and with the continued and much valued support of the **PH Holt Foundation** we awarded 2 very different MET Environment Week Grants:

- The Friends of Renshaw Street: Keen to build on the recent refurbishment of the highway and footpaths the Friends of Renshaw Street are looking to soften and brighten up the street scape with hanging baskets come the spring.
- Love Norris Green Community Fun Day: The event took place on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2013 organised by and for the community of Norris Green with support from Faiths4Change, and included a wide range of free (funded) practical, environmental activities will take place for the whole community to encourage awareness of the local and wider environment.

## Support

This year MET has supported grant applications by other organisations such as the Friends of St James' Park in their Heritage Lottery bid and the City of Liverpool with its City Cycle Ambition bid.

We financially supported the **Anthony Bradshaw Memorial Lecture 2013** – Rising to the Challenge: bringing green to our urban landscapes. The lecture explored how can we be sustainable and provide health, wellbeing, happiness and wealth to the future of our cities? National and international experts shared their ideas from their own experiences and ideas for future urban landscapes. Speakers included, James Hitchmough, London Olympic Park, Ruud Oosterhoff, Eric Brandes and Tabitha Van Hove, Amstelveen Gardens and Richard Scott of Landlife.



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The **Merseyside Civic Society** celebrated their 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary earlier this year. MET volunteers were on hand to promote the activities of the Trust in the market area.

A significant amount of time has been given to **Agri-spaces**. Agri-spaces is a partnership project which aims to create a network of organisations that will share techniques and management approaches used in urban agriculture, and develop ways of increasing the benefit of such schemes to the communities they serve.

The partnership made up of 3 countries, Lithuania, Romania and the UK, all with experience and dedication to regeneration and training will examine the most effective ways of initiating urban agriculture schemes and of ensuring the support of significant stakeholders.

Urban farming methods from partner countries will be explored in order to find the most efficient and efficient approaches. Case studies will be collected from all partners (Liverpool partners being **Liverpool Vision and Pacific Stream**), with the results together with learning materials available on an accessible on-line platform.

Common guidelines will be developed which can be used across Europe by those who wish to develop Urban Agriculture in their communities. The training will follow innovative facilitated learning developed from action learning methodologies.

The target group of this project are people involved in the creation and development of urban agriculture including individuals, community groups, those involved with urban regeneration and social enterprises.

Urban agriculture has a particular positive impact to those on low incomes, the unemployed, and new immigrants who may fit into both of the previous groups and may additionally be unable to source produce important to their diet. However, the broader urban community will not be excluded.

## **Communications**

Communications have been a challenge this year with us being effectively locked out of our website this has now been remedied with a new site up and running.

MetMail has continued to be produced seasonally with more being sent electronically than by post.

Embracing new forms of media, MET now has a Googlegroup, Twitter account and Linked In discussion group.



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## **Changing Environments**

The environment has quite rightly started to take centre stage again with the city's ambition to become European Green Capital in the future and the establishing of a Mayoral Commission on Sustainability,

Along-side this we see the emergence of the City Region Local Nature Partnership, the developing Liverpool Green Partnership, both of which MET Executive Committee members actively engage with and contribute to.

The environment has also hit the newspaper and TV headlines with the proposed sale and development of Sefton Park Meadows, the suspension of bus lanes in Liverpool, and licenses being granted for the exploration of coal bed methane and fracking technology to name but a few.

## **Challenges Ahead**

MET has been working for the environment on Merseyside since 1984, 2014 is our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary and our stalwart membership base is understandably on the mature side. Next year will see a more focussed effort of actively engaging with the younger generation hence the adoption of new communication media and we will be looking for more collaborative working with other organisations to raise the profile of the Trust in the pursuance of its charitable objectives.

Stephen Sykes  
Chairman